

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 215 642

HE 015 025

AUTHOR Sweeney, Robert D., Comp.  
TITLE Raising Money Through Gift Clubs: A Survey of Techniques at 42 Institutions.  
INSTITUTION Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, Washington, D.C.  
REPORT NO ISBN-0-89964-191-1  
PUB DATE 82  
NOTE 76p.  
AVAILABLE FROM CASE Publication Order Department, Box 298, Alexandria, VA 22313 (\$16.50).  
  
EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.  
DESCRIPTORS Alumni; Case Studies; \*Financial Support; \*Fund Raising; Higher Education; \*Incentives; Institutional Characteristics; \*Motivation Techniques; \*Organizations (Groups); \*Private Colleges; Proprietary Schools; Rewards; School Surveys  
IDENTIFIERS \*Gift Clubs

## ABSTRACT

The way that 42 private schools, colleges, and universities use gift clubs to motivate donors is examined. Based on a nationwide survey, information is presented on the clubs' origins, requirements for membership, methods of enlisting new members, and ways of encouraging current members to increase gifts. Attention is also directed to the clubs' internal structures, programs, and activities, benefits to members, and approximate costs. The top programs are shown to share one common denominator: all have significant prestige among their own constituents. They accomplish this by making the program a priority, with first-class programming and a thorough, detailed approach. Some strategies the surveyed institutions find particularly effective are: (1) motivation techniques such as stepping stones within a gift society or societies representing different levels of giving; (2) providing members of preferential treatment, such as free parking, free admission to campus events, and use of school facilities, which please members while costing the institution little or nothing; (3) enlisting gift society members' help, both as volunteer leaders and as personal recruiters for the club; (4) persuading trustees or others to pick up the tab for dinners and other events honoring gift society members; (5) combining personalized direct mail solicitation with telephone and/or personal contact; and (6) focusing major giving efforts around reunion classes, with the class chairperson and other volunteers contributing much of the energy behind the drive. Profiles of the 42 institutions' clubs are given, and two articles and authors tell how to build a gift club program: "The Gift of Belonging: Building a Program for Priority Prospects," David C. Ferner and "Building Gift Club Membership," Robert D. Sweeney. (SW)

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ED215642

# Raising Money Through Gift Clubs

A Survey of Techniques at 42 Institutions

Compiled by Robert D. Sweeney

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## INTRODUCTION

### Motivation!

It is one of the essential ingredients in generating substantial private philanthropy. If a college, university, independent school, or association is to be successful, it must motivate its constituents not only to give, but to give at increasingly higher levels. This need to motivate people is the basic premise for creating special gift clubs or major giving societies.

These organizations set the standard of support for all alumni, parents, and friends to follow and serve an important function in motivating donors to increase past gifts or make first-time gifts at a leadership level. Giving societies are as different as the institutions they represent. However, the top programs share one common denominator: All have significant prestige among their own constituents. They accomplish this by making the program a priority, with first-class programming and a thorough, detailed approach.

This monograph reports information on special gift clubs or major giving societies collected from 42 colleges, universities, and independent schools in response to a nationwide CASE survey. The survey highlights several aspects of gift societies: their origins, requirements for membership, methods to solicit new members and to encourage current members to increase giving levels; the societies' internal structures; and the programs and perks they offer to members.

Some strategies the surveyed institutions find particularly effective are:

1. Motivation techniques such as stepping stones within a gift society or societies representing different levels of giving;
2. Perks that please members while costing the institution little or nothing, such as free parking, free admission to campus events, use of school facilities, and other preferential treatment;
3. Enlisting gift society members' help, both as volunteer leaders and as personal recruiters for the club;
4. Persuading trustees or others to pick up the tab for dinners and other events honoring gift

society members, thus defraying the program's costs;

5. Combining personalized direct mail solicitation with telephone and/or personal contact;
6. Focusing major giving efforts around reunion classes, with the class chairperson and other volunteers contributing much of the energy behind the drive.

You should always remember one important fact: Gift clubs or major giving societies are created for the benefit of the institution in an attempt to aid its fund-raising program. Your institution should maintain maximum flexibility so that the people who need to be included (for cultivation of future gifts, recognition of past gifts, and so on,) are included.

Many of the institutions represented in this monograph are doing some of the finest work in the gift club/major giving society area of fund raising. Review their efforts, question their strategies, and extract ideas that will be useful to your own efforts.

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## BROWN UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Nicholas Brown Society, founded in 1976, is named in honor of the man whose \$5,000 donation to Rhode Island College prompted it to be renamed Brown University in 1804.

Manning Fellows, founded in the early 1970s, is named after Brown's first president.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals, corporations, foundations, associations, and organizations are eligible for membership in both societies.

Membership in the Nicholas Brown Society requires a \$5,000 annual gift; in Manning Fellows, a \$1,000 annual gift.

Capital gifts, deferred gifts of \$1,000, Class Endowment Program, and Life Income Gifts also qualify for membership in Manning Fellows.

### SOLICITATION

Gifts are solicited by direct mail, personal and telephone contact. There is an annual re-solicitation drive.

Nicholas Brown Society members tend to maintain their level of giving unrestricted gifts only; Manning Fellows members tend to increase it.

The university is considering a higher-level club that would require a \$10,000 minimum gift.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

There is no volunteer leadership structure.

The Nicholas Brown Society sponsors an annual dinner and presents members with original works of art.

Costs for programming and perks run \$4,000 a year.

## BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Committee of One Thousand, named to motivate donors to give at least \$1,000 and to encourage 1,000 donors to reach this level, was founded in 1975.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership requires a \$1,000 gift or a total giving history of \$10,000. About 250 individuals, corporations, foundations, associations, and organizations are members.

Deferred gifts of \$1,000 and capital gifts also qualify for membership.

### SOLICITATION

Approximately 1,500 of the 28,000 alumni are solicited by direct mail at the beginning of Bucknell's annual giving campaign. As a follow-up, about 1,000 are telephoned during fall and winter phonathons. Personal contact is made with approximately 50-75 alumni. These techniques raised \$678,497 from 156 individuals in the 1980-81 fiscal year.

Bucknell requests an increase each year in annual giving, if it seems advisable based on a member's giving history. Currently under study are plans for a higher level gift society that would require a \$5,000 gift for membership.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The chairperson and 25 members of Bucknell's National Committee on Annual Giving personally solicit gifts at the \$1,000 and above level.

Members are invited to a black-tie gourmet dinner with entertainment each year, followed by a day of golf matches, campus and town tours and breakfast at the President's house. They also receive a Committee of One Thousand newsletter.

The society's major expense is producing the newsletter. The trustees pick up the tab for the annual dinner.

## CAPITAL UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Capital University Foundation--a "receiving foundation"--was approved by the Board of Regents in 1965.

### MEMBERSHIP

The society accepts only individuals as members. Membership requires annual gifts of \$300 for Friends, \$600 for Fellows, and \$1,200 for Founders.

Deferred gifts also qualify for membership. The minimum levels are \$7,500 for Life Friends, \$15,000 for Life Fellows, and \$30,000 for Life Founders.

### SOLICITATION

Direct mail, personal and telephone contact invite support. Foundation members are encouraged to enlist their friends' and acquaintances' support.

By closely monitoring all gifts, Capital can target individuals whose gifts are nearing the Foundation's membership level. The university then urges these individuals to upgrade their gifts and to pledge continuing support so they will qualify for membership.

Solicitation focuses on getting members to move from one level of participation to a higher level. Information about the university's current financial status and pleas for increased support are two techniques used.

The foundation's participation levels were chosen to be easily divisible into periodic payments--either annual, semi-annual, quarterly, or monthly. In the offing is a higher level of participation within the same organization.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

After a hiatus of several years, a volunteer executive committee was re-established two years ago and has proved to be relatively successful.

The university treats members to an on-campus annual banquet. Since travel time precludes some members from attending the

CAPITAL UNIVERSITY (continued)

banquet, the university is considering "mini banquets" in areas of concentrated membership.

Members receive free admission to Capital's athletic and cultural events and free on-campus parking. Foundation members also receive plaques.

The foundation's outlay is \$2,500 per year for the banquet and \$25 for each plaque.

## CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

University Fellows was founded in 1972. Case Western also has a President's Club and a Dean's Club.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the University Fellows requires individuals to donate \$25,000 a year. The President's Club honors \$5,000 donors; the Dean's Club, \$1,000 donors.

Capital gifts also qualify for membership.

### SOLICITATION

Gifts for University Fellows are solicited by personal contact. The gift level tends to remain stationary.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

This is the first year that activities and solicitation will take place for University Fellows and the President's Club.

## CHOATE ROSEMARY HALL

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Founders Associates, named in honor of the founders of both Choate School and Rosemary Hall, began operations in 1975-76.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals, corporations, and foundations who donate \$1,000 annually may become members.

Deferred gifts of \$1,000 to the Annual Fund Class Endowment also qualify for membership.

### SOLICITATION

Every five years, classes sponsor a reunion gift effort. The class special gift committee or other class organization puts out all the energy for these drives, which have proved to be successful ventures, bringing in 30 percent of total gifts. Face-to-face solicitation at reunions and other personal solicitations account for another 40 percent of gifts.

Non-reunion classes receive letters early in the fall from the chairperson or vice chairperson of the Founders Associates. These letters note the amount the individual gave the previous year and invite him or her to continue membership and perhaps increase the gift by at least the amount of inflation. A telephone call follows or immediately precedes the letters; telethon callers also sign follow-up letters to prospective donors. This method accounts for about 30 percent of gifts received.

Solicitation drives aim at keeping gift amounts going up. Coping with the inflation factor is one current strategy for motivating donors. Donors at the \$2,500 and \$5,000 levels get special recognition. The next logical perch for a higher level will be \$10,000.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

A volunteer chairperson and vice chairperson head the Founders Associates. They are charged with approving the yearly schedule and the initial battery of solicitation letters, as well as signing acknowledgment letters and letters requesting permission to use a donor's name the following

CHOATE ROSEMARY HALL (continued)

year. Class agents and reunion gift chairpersons do most solicitation work.

Founders Associates are invited to the school's year-end ceremony and dinner with the trustees, faculty, and staff.

Associates initially receive a five-year paperweight. They are also given a yearly diary with their name, "Founders Associates," and the year stamped on the front cover. Donors of \$5,000 or more receive a presentation book, which has some connection to the school, with an inscribed bookplate. Trustees and committee members have at times covered the cost of these items.

With their permission, the names of Founders Associates are included in the alumni magazine and the invitation to join the following year.

Program costs are \$2,500 a year, with the highest expense being the two solicitation letters at \$1,500.

## CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Res Publica, named to commemorate Claremont's specialty in public affairs, was founded in 1960.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who donate \$1,000 a year are eligible for membership.

Deferred gifts of at least \$1,000 and capital gifts also qualify for membership.

### SOLICITATION

Direct mail and personal and telephone contact are used to solicit gifts.

Salesmanship--both personal and through direct mail--is the prime method employed in encouraging donors to increase giving.

Claremont plans to establish a society recognizing \$10,000 contributors.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

Volunteer leaders head the society.

Luncheons with speakers are held for members three to four times a year. They also receive mementos, such as books.

Res Publica's expenses are approximately \$15,000 a year.

## COLLEGE OF ST. THOMAS

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Individuals who donate \$1,000 a year are eligible for membership.

There are 200 members.

Deferred gifts of at least \$20,000 also qualify for membership.

### SOLICITATION

Personal contact spearheads gift solicitation. About one percent of the President's Council members were generated through direct mail, the rest through personal contact.

Members receive letters each July about renewing their membership. Telephone calls and personal visits follow, if there is no response.

The President's Council attempts to motivate increased giving by pointing out the comparative value of a dollar today and a dollar when members originally joined.

Another motivation tactic is a higher level within the Council, namely, Fellows of the President's Council. Fellows are expected to contribute \$2,500 a year, \$25,000 at one time, or make a \$50,000 deferred gift. Approximately 15 percent of the members have moved up to this level.

After the Fellows of the President's Council has become better established, the college will create a higher-level group requiring a minimum gift of \$5,000 a year, \$50,000 at one time, or a \$100,000 deferred gift.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

A chairperson, who serves a two-year term, and a committee of six President's Council members are the volunteer leaders.

The council sponsors an annual dinner for members, featuring a speaker of national prominence.

Members receive special passes to athletic events, plays, concerts, and lectures at the college. They may also take courses at the college at no charge. The annual costs of the President's Council run about \$9,000 a year.

## COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The President's Council, named to imply a small group that is close to the institution's president, began in 1970.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who donate at least \$1,000 annually may become members. Corporations, foundations, associations, and organizations are eligible to be associate members with the same minimum donation.

Capital gifts and deferred gifts of \$100,000 also qualify for membership.

### SOLICITATION

Direct mail accounts for 75 percent of membership, followed by telephone calls (15 percent) and personal visits (10 percent).

The chairperson writes personal letters asking for renewals, preferably at a higher level, in early fall.

Newly-created levels within the council encourage members to "step up" their gift levels.

Special projects that call for extra gifts, reunion appeals, challenge gifts, and peer pressure from fellow council members are brought into play to encourage increased giving.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The President's Council is headed by a chairperson who has agents in different geographic locations.

Members are treated to an annual weekend that includes a black tie reception, dinner, and musical program, breakfast with special guests, a Charter Day convocation program and reception, and usually a business meeting and/or special lecture. They also receive advance copies of some publications, special parking decals, library cards, engraved pewter plates, and invitations to special events.

Costs vary depending upon the annual program and size of membership, but generally run between \$12,000-\$18,000, excluding development staff time.

## CORNELL UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Tower Club, founded in 1961-62, commemorates a campus landmark--the Library Tower--of great significance to every alumnus.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who contribute \$2,000 a year may become members.

Deferred gifts of at least \$5,000 or additions to established funds of \$2,000 or more and capital gifts also qualify for membership.

### SOLICITATION

Telephone calls and personal letters each account for 25 percent of gifts. Direct mail techniques are responsible for 20 percent; personal visits for 10 percent, and some combination of all these techniques for 20 percent.

The annual giving program emphasizes giving at the Tower Club level.

Personal solicitation, reunion giving, and a general upgrading theme encourage members to give above the minimum \$2,000 level, and 20 percent do give more than \$2,500.

The university is considering a \$5,000 and a \$10,000 level within the Tower Club. The club upgraded its minimum gift level from \$1,000 in 1978-79.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The Tower Club has a national chairperson who also serves as quasi vice chairperson of giving. Each reunion class and area organization is also encouraged to have a Tower Club (major gift) solicitation committee.

Members are invited to special receptions in their area, usually in conjunction with travel by the president. They receive special mailings of "insider" information and are invited to an annual dinner in New York City. An event is held on campus for Tower Club members each year during reunion. The 1981-82 budget for the program is \$50,000.

## DEERFIELD ACADEMY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The 1797 Club, whose name recognizes the year Deerfield was founded, began operation in 1970.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who contribute at least \$1,000 annually may become members.

### SOLICITATION

Gifts are solicited by direct mail with some personal follow-up where necessary or desirable.

Each year all previous members are invited to participate again.

There are plans to motivate increased giving, such as through an honor roll or other special recognition for larger contributions. Gift levels now tend to remain stationary.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

A dinner is held annually at the "21" Club in New York City to honor members.

## DUKE UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Founder's Society began in 1980. The name was chosen because of the connotation of the word "founder" in regard to present and future founders, as well as past ones.

### MEMBERSHIP

A gift of \$10,000 qualifies individuals, corporations, and foundations for membership. (Annual giving clubs in the various schools recognize donors at the \$1,000 level.)

Establishment of a fully funded endowment, either directly or through deferred or capital gifts, also qualifies for membership. As defined by the board of trustees, the figures for endowments are: Endowed Library Fund, \$10,000; Endowed Scholarship Fund, \$25,000; Endowed Visiting Professorship, \$400,000; Endowed Clinical or Research Professorship, \$500,000; Endowed Professorship (non-science or medicine), \$750,000; Endowed Medical or Science Professorship, \$1 million.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

Trustees, administrators, faculty, alumni, and friends comprise a small ad hoc committee that advises the Founder's Society.

The society's budget for its first three years is \$25,000 a year.

## GRINNELL COLLEGE

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The President's Club, named to reflect association with the highest executive level and the primary person with whom major donors relate, was founded in 1971-72.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who donate \$1,000 annually are eligible for membership, as are those who give \$50,000 in outright gifts over five years.

Deferred gifts of \$50,000 or more qualify an individual for life membership in the President's Club.

### SOLICITATION

Direct mail is the most effective means of soliciting gifts: it is responsible for 80 percent of the success rate. Personal contacts account for 13 percent of the gifts generated, telephone contact for 7 percent.

Computer checks on nondonors to be resolicited keep the program moving forward. The club uses selected requests and challenge grants to motivate donors to higher levels.

In general, most gifts tend to remain stationary, except for those selected for upgrading.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

Regional advocates help promote the President's Club.

Members are invited to a fall weekend on campus.

The society's annual costs are \$1,500.

## HOPE COLLEGE

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Second Century Club (2CC) was initiated in 1966 on the occasion of Hope College's 100th anniversary.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who donate \$10,000 as a single gift or pledge \$1,000 a year for 10 years may become members.

Deferred gifts of \$10,000 and capital gifts also qualify for membership.

### SOLICITATION

Gifts at this level are solicited personally. Cultivation may take several years, but results in a high success rate.

The club encourages members to bring prospective members to 2CC events and to otherwise help the society to grow. The gift renewal program consists of a letter from the president of the college. Gift levels have not tended to increase.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

A volunteer serves in the honorary post of 2CC president. Members are entertained twice a year at a gala dinner. In the summer, this is followed by a theater party. In the winter members attend Christmas Vespers on campus.

The club's budget is \$4,500 a year.

## INDIANA UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Well House Society is named after a campus landmark, an old well house, which was originally a gift to the university. The society became fully organized in 1976, after two years in the conceptual stage.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals and corporations giving \$1,500 annually--of which \$500 must be unrestricted--are eligible for membership. Life memberships can be obtained with a one-time \$25,000 gift or a \$100,000 deferred gift.

### SOLICITATION

Current members' help in "spreading the word" generates a large percentage of society's membership. Personal and telephone contact and individual personal letters are also used.

Each member receives a letter during the anniversary month of his or her membership, suggesting that he or she continue membership by contributing.

Expanding the society's base by adding new members has been a major focus, taking precedence over increasing giving levels. Upgrading giving levels will be tackled during an upcoming capital campaign.

Two ideas for increasing gift levels are under consideration: increasing the minimum donation by 20 percent, or forming an elite group within the organization that would require a \$3,000 annual contribution, of which \$1,000 must be unrestricted.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

Three annual special events honor members. In the spring, a black tie dinner coincides with the school's Little 500 race week festivities. In the fall, a dinner and brunch highlight a weekend that also includes home football and university cultural events. Basketball and a reception are the winter fare.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY (continued)

Members receive the best service possible, including help with tickets, rooms, and so on. A set of custom-made bookends is another perk.

The annual budget is \$25,000.

## JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Johns Hopkins has three major gift societies: the Associates, founded in 1971; the President's Club, in 1978; and the new Johns Hopkins Fellows.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who give \$1,000 a year may become members of the Associates, as may donors of capital gifts. Deferred gifts are considered for membership on a case-by-case basis. An unrestricted annual gift of \$5,000 qualifies for membership in the President's Club, and a \$2,500 unrestricted annual gift for membership in the Johns Hopkins Fellows.

### SOLICITATION

Eighty-five percent of Associates members join as a result of direct mail solicitation, 10 percent due to telephone contact, and 5 percent due to personal contact.

The Associates' program for gift renewals is encompassed in the annual fund campaign solicitations each year. Membership in the higher-level clubs is used as an incentive for increasing donations.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

A chairperson, secretary-treasurer, and membership committee run the Associates. Social and educational programs--lectures, field trips, tours, and an annual dinner--are provided for members. The 58 President's Club members are treated to a special annual dinner featuring a nationally prominent speaker.

Associates may join the University Faculty Club and receive special treatment of requests, as well as library privileges, if desired.

The Associates' annual budget is \$27,987, excluding staff salaries.

## THE LAWRENCEVILLE SCHOOL

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Founded in 1965, the Head Master Group is named to reflect the person who invites membership in the group -- this seemed the most appropriate and prestigious symbol for this purpose.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who contribute at least \$1,500 annually may become members.

### SOLICITATION

Letters from the school head solicit almost all gifts. A few are obtained by alumni class agents, who annually resolicit their classmates who belong to the Head Master group.

Challenge gifts and class goals for reunion classes (major reunions are every five years) are used as levers for increasing giving. At least half of the Head Master Group members raise the level of their giving regularly.

A proposal for a Trustee's Society with a membership level of \$5,000 a year is being discussed.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

In 1981-82 the Head Master Group will enlist a vice chairperson, responsible for encouraging regional organizations to identify candidates for the group.

Members receive a set of specially engraved glasses, with a note of appreciation from the school head and other "premiums" from time to time. An annual event is under consideration.

Currently, the group's only costs are \$12.00 for glasses.

## LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Begun in 1967, the Asa Packer Society is named after Lehigh's founder.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who contribute \$1,000 annually, as well as deferred gifts of the same amount and capital gifts, may become members.

### SOLICITATION

Telephone contact brings in 70 percent of Asa Packer members, with direct mail responsible for 20 percent and personal contact for 10 percent.

Phonathons are annual events to encourage membership renewals and increased giving. Plans are under way for a higher level of recognition, probably to donors of \$2,500 or more.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

A chairperson (also part of the annual fund) heads the society. Members are treated to a fall event in New York City that centers around programs about the university. They also receive special publications.

Programming and perks run \$25,000 annually.

## NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

In 1954 Northwestern University established the John Evans Club, named in honor of one of the university's founders.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership is available to individuals who pledge \$15,000 or more to the university over a period of 15 years or who pledge \$25,000 or more through their estate. Both annual and capital gifts qualify for membership.

### SOLICITATION

The university solicits gifts by personal contact and direct mail, with personal contact being the dominant method in a normal year. The university attempts to motivate increased giving by keeping the membership aware of the special needs of the university through a newsletter, meetings with university administrators, and so on. This year the review committee of the John Evans Club is considering establishing a higher level of recognition within the club.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The club has a volunteer leadership structure that includes a chairperson, two vice chairpersons, and 18 additional board members, plus several life board members.

The club sponsors about 11 social and educational events each year for its members; some are gratis, and some are self-supporting. Members also receive a recognition pin and a John Evans Club plate, which are nominal in expense. The intangible benefits include individualized attention to questions and requests. The club is recognized throughout the university, and members receive special attention.

The costs of programming and perks are about \$45,000.

## OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Occidental has two gift societies. The President's Circle (Circle signifies the "O" in Occidental) was conceived in 1969 and first met in 1970. Major donors who attended the first black tie dinner liked the idea and suggested making it an annual event.

The William Stewart Young Society (WSYS), was begun in 1978. It is named after a founder and early president of Occidental College. Members of his family continue to be generous supporters of the college; hence, the name both honors the man and reflects a standard of commitment to the college.

### MEMBERSHIP

The President's Circle is open to individual donors of \$1,000 annually or of \$10,000 in deferred gifts or capital gifts. Cumulative gifts of \$10,000 or more qualify an individual for life membership, although each lifetime member is also encouraged to give on a regular basis.

Donors of unrestricted annual gifts of \$150 may join the William Stewart Young Society. Capital gifts presently qualify for membership, but the society is considering a shift to unrestricted annual gifts only by 1982-83. Persons under 30 may join as affiliates for a yearly unrestricted gift of \$75.

### SOLICITATION

On the anniversary of their last gift, President's Circle members are invited by letter or personally to continue their membership. All major gifts are solicited personally, which has proved to be a more effective technique than letters.

Increasing membership levels for the President's Circle has been under discussion for some time, but has proved a difficult problem to resolve, due to the wide income range among its constituents. Some retired or older members must stretch to make \$1,000 contributions, while others could afford far more. "Grandfathering" early members and setting higher minimums for new members is one potential solution to this problem, but may pose too many bookkeeping headaches.

## OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE (continued)

Personalized direct mail brought in approximately 60 percent of the William Stewart Young Society's membership last year, while another 20 percent enrolled after telephone follow-up to the direct mail campaign. The remaining 20 percent joined as a result of regular alumni and parents' annual fund mailings.

Three renewal reminder letters and telephone calls invite members to continue in the society; 75-80 percent a year do so, while 2-3 percent move into the President's Circle. All but a handful of the individuals who fail to renew their membership still make gifts to the college during the year.

About half the members tend to increase their gifts annually, with 25-30 percent maintaining their gift level, and the rest not renewing. For the past two years, increases in gifts have averaged 50 percent a year.

An annual challenge to increase giving has been the primary device used to motivate larger gifts. Mailings stress the increasing costs of an Occidental education and the size of the tuition "gap." They also compare today's costs to those when alumni were in college.

Occidental, which is entering the construction phase of a major program, hopes to move away from the membership idea and concentrate instead on gifts in specific recognition units (i.e., classroom, \$50,000; faculty office, \$10,000; student laboratory carrel, \$5,000; Performing Arts Center, \$6 million, and so on).

## ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The President's Circle has an executive committee composed of a chairperson, vice chairperson, and seven other members.

An annual Appreciation Dinner with a major speaker (among past speakers were Eric Sevareid and Carl Sagan) honors President's Circle members. Sometimes departing from the traditional format, the Circle has also hosted, for example, a museum tour with cocktails and a gourmet buffet.

A bronze symbol of the President's Circle goes to members who have contributed for three consecutive years. This society's budget is \$15,000 a year.

WSYS volunteer leadership consists of a working board of 15 members, headed by a president and vice president.

OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE (continued)

Five members are elected each year to three-year terms. Board members help plan events, identify membership prospects, make telephone calls, and host society events.

All members are invited to three or four campus events each year, usually dinners or receptions in conjunction with lectures or performances. President's Circle members are also invited to these events.

Members' names are printed in large type in a special section of the college's Honor Roll of Donors.

The 1981-82 WSYS budget is \$3,620 to cover invitation printing and postage. Members pay for their own dinners and receptions.

## OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Presidents Club and the Presidents Council, so-named because the university president was directly involved in their establishment, were founded in 1963 and 1979, respectively.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who donate \$20,000 cash (minimum \$2,000 annually over 10 years), a \$20,000 gift-in-kind, or a \$60,000 deferred gift may join the 4,500-member Presidents Club. Capital gifts also qualify for membership. The Presidents Council's gift commitment is \$100,000 cash minimum or \$300,000 deferred.

### SOLICITATION

Gifts are solicited by staff (responsible for 40 percent of the Presidents Club's membership of 4,500), other members (30 percent), and referrals (20 percent). Other techniques account for the remaining 10 percent.

Thank you letters and personal contacts request that members increase their gifts.

The elite (118-member) Presidents Council, with its high entry level, is used to motivate donors to higher amounts.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The Presidents Club is directed by a 13-member executive committee made up of members. The university president, vice president for university development, and the chairperson of the Development Fund Board are ex-officio members. The director of the Presidents Club also attends the semi-annual meetings of the committee. A chairperson and vice-chairperson head the committee.

A Presidents Club Spring Day is held annually. The program varies; efforts are made to expose distinguished faculty as well as university and individual college programs to members.

Brunches are held in the fall before the three or four home football games.

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY (continued)

Presidents Club members receive free campus parking, football tickets if desired, use of campus facilities for regular fees, an award certificate, and assistance with campus "red tape."

They are charged for their attendance at club functions, which reduces the organization's expenses.

## OHIO UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Ohio University named its gift society the Trustees' Academy in honor of the trustees of The Ohio University Fund, Inc., the governing board that oversees private philanthropy at Ohio University. The academy was founded in 1966.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership includes individuals, corporations, foundations, associations, organizations, and small businesses who give \$10,000 over a period of 10 years at \$1,000 per year. A deferred gift must be \$25,000 in trust, \$30,000 in a will, or \$25,000 in life insurance.

### SOLICITATION

Most new memberships are solicited through personal contact and mail. After membership is established, each year's solicitation is done by mail. The donors' gifts do not increase over the years.

Ohio University is in the process of organizing a gift renewal campaign, since most of the donors will fulfill their \$10,000 pledges soon. The university is discussing whether to create a gift society for a higher level of donation.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The Trustees' Academy does not have a volunteer leadership structure.

Pre- and post-athletic events such as buffets at the president's house are offered to members who live close by. There are also four gatherings a year with the president in attendance.

The academy's annual budget is \$4,850.

## PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Legendary Mount Nittany is one of the mountains that towers over the campus of The Pennsylvania State University. The Mount Nittany Society, founded in 1977, represents the pinnacle of private support for the school.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership includes individuals who give \$30,000 or more payable over a mutually-agreed time period, a deferred gift commitment of \$60,000 or more, or a deferred gift of \$30,000 with a "cash" gift of \$15,000.

### SOLICITATION

Approximately 80 percent of the gifts come from personal contact and 20 percent come from telephone and direct mail.

There is no specific gift renewal program, but an individual donor may respond to a major fund-raising appeal for a project such as the indoor sports complex, the agriculture arena, scholarships, or endowed chairs.

There may, however, be a slight increase in giving among the donors upon renewal.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

Each living member has been recognized by Dr. John W. Oswald, president of the university, with a medallion and a certificate. All members' names are displayed on bronze plates mounted on a wall in the Mount Nittany Room at the Nittany Lion Inn. The university also has a black tie dinner and cultural program for members.

A higher gift level club, the Tower Club, is under consideration. To qualify for the Tower Society, a person's lifetime gifts would have to total \$100,000.

## PHILLIPS ACADEMY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Non Sibi Associates, whose name is part of the Phillips school seal, was launched in 1980-81, on the heels of a successful \$50 million campaign.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who donate \$1,000 annually may become members of the society.

### SOLICITATION

To date, Non Sibi Associates has solicited gifts strictly by mail.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

Two cochairpersons and a small committee comprise the society's volunteer leadership. As Non Sibi moves toward more personal solicitation, the committee is expected to grow. The society is run by the alumni fund staff person as part of the fund.

The Phillips Academy plans an associates day on campus in the fall.

## RADCLIFFE COLLEGE

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Radcliffe College has two major gift societies: The Association of Radcliffe College and The President's Associates. Both societies were founded in 1973.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership for Radcliffe College Associates is \$1,000 a year; for the President's Associates it is \$5,000 a year. Individuals, family foundations, and, in special cases, associations and organizations are eligible for membership.

Deferred gifts of \$5,000 initially with \$1,000 additions, as well as capital gifts, also qualify for membership.

### SOLICITATION

Renewals are solicited by direct mail. The renewal rate is about 65 percent. Potential reunion associates and other potential or lapsed associates are solicited by telephone and personal contact; this accounts for about 35 percent of the group.

The chairperson of the board writes a gift renewal letter personally to all the associates. Radcliffe estimates that over a period of about five years the gifts tend to increase.

Reunion solicitations are helpful as a means of increasing the gift norm of donors. Special efforts for named funds, memorial gifts, building projects, and approaches for special program interests also tend to increase the size of gifts.

Radcliffe has no plans for a higher-level organization. It has just started a lower-level club at \$500, the New Century Associates. This club has proven extremely effective in upgrading matching gift donors.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The associate committee consists of a chairperson and a committee. The reunion associates effort has a special gift chairperson and committee for each class.

RADCLIFFE COLLEGE (continued)

The associates have an annual Associate Day gathering, consisting of an academic program, plus a lunch or dinner, usually held in May.

Associates Day costs about \$2,500.

## RICE UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Rice University Associates was founded in 1954. Its program was originally intended to attract non-alumni into university activities, to bring friends of the university together in a society to advance the welfare of the university.

### MEMBERSHIP

Associates--who may be individuals only--assume a \$15,000 unrestricted commitment, which may be paid over 10 years. They become life members at the end of that time. A deferred gift of \$50,000 or more is also accepted. Many life members continue their annual gifts to become contributing life members.

### SOLICITATION

Prospective associates receive a hand-delivered (if possible) letter signed by the president of the university and the chairperson of the board. Renewal requests are sent by letter. While an average annual gift of \$15,000 continues after the commitment of that amount, some choose to support designated programs with gifts that are much larger. However, efforts to encourage larger giving are low key in the hope that continued association with Rice University will enhance the possibility of deferred gifts or payments.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

A trustee of the university serves as chairperson of Rice Associates.

Associates are invited to many university functions, including a buffet held at the president's home before a home football game. There are also formal dinner meetings with interesting speakers. Table seating assignments are done with great care so that each table of eight includes at least one faculty couple seated with three Associate couples with similar interests. Speakers have included such individuals as Edward Teller, Art Buchwald, R. Buckminster Fuller, Margaret Mead, and Henry Kissinger. Associates also receive a special card allowing use of certain facilities on the Rice campus, and a small statuette inscribed with the individual's name and "Rice University Associates."

RICE UNIVERSITY (continued)

The annual black tie dinner has ranged in cost from \$7,000 to \$18,000 over the past four years. The statuettes cost \$60 each.

## ST. LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Because of society members' close association with the president and their leadership role in the future of the university, St. Lawrence University named its gift society the President's Associates. It was founded in 1969.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who give \$1,000 annually are eligible.

Within the President's Associates there are two higher levels. A member of the President's Associates Fellows gives \$5,000 or more to the fund. A member of the President's Associates Senior Fellows gives \$10,000 or more to the fund.

### SOLICITATION

President's Associates gifts are solicited in a variety of ways, depending upon the individual being approached. Methods include personal letters from the chairperson of the President's Associates, special leadership telethons, and personal contacts.

Once an individual has become a member of the President's Associates, he or she is placed on a special list of individuals who receive only personal appeals. They are likely to be contacted by either a classmate who is also a member of the President's Associates, the chairperson of the President's Associates, the chairperson of the annual fund, or an alumnus who lives nearby.

In general, members of the President's Associates tend to increase their giving in small increments because of a concerted effort by the university to make donors aware of the need for increased gifts.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The President's Associates program has a volunteer leadership structure.

Each year a special dinner in New York City is held for the alumni, parents, and friend members of the President's Associates. An invitation to this gala is the major benefit derived from membership in the Associates. The dinner costs

ST. LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY (continued)

between \$6,000 and \$7,000 each year. The President's Associates plaques, which are sent only to first-time members, cost approximately \$30 each.

## ST. OLAF COLLEGE

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Manitou Fund is named after the Manitou Heights on which St. Olaf College is located. This gift society has been in operation since 1970.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership consists of individuals who contribute \$1,000 a year. Capital gifts and deferred gifts of \$1,000 also qualify a person for membership.

### SOLICITATION

Gifts are sought first through personal visits, which are followed by a phone call or letter. Each time donors are solicited, they are asked to renew their gift at the previous level or to increase the sum.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

Donors are invited to a selected number of off- and on-campus events. The program costs are insignificant.

## SMITH COLLEGE

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Smith College named its gift society the Sophia Smith Associates (SSA) after its founder. It was launched in 1971-72; the number of alumnae giving at the \$1,000 level almost doubled in that year.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who donate \$1,000 a year, excluding corporate matching gifts, may become members. There were 914 Associates in 1980-81.

### SOLICITATION

Gifts are solicited by one direct mailing in the fall. Class fund agents and special gifts (reunion gifts) chairpersons write personal notes and/or call SSA prospects. Reunion gift chairpersons in particular play an assertive role; many classes set goals to recruit a certain number of SSAs or use a large gift or pledge to challenge classmates to give at the \$1,000 Associate level or above. This approach has paid off: in reunion years there is a definite increase by the regular \$1,000 donor to several times that amount.

Smith considered establishing a second gift society for \$5,000-plus donors, but decided against it after getting negative reactions from alumnae who regularly give in this bracket.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

One of the eight volunteer members of the Alumnae Fund Committee chairs the Associates.

Associates are invited to a Dessert Party at Alumnae House over reunion weekend. In some years, they are given a memento such as a replica of a small museum piece--i.e., a purse-size calendar featuring Smith Rare Book Room material. Last year, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Alumnae Association, Associates received a watercolor of Alumnae House.

SSA's budget has never exceeded \$7,000 annually for all expenses, except clerical.

## SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Southern Methodist University has three major gift societies: the Umphrey Lee Associates (named after its fourth president), the Founders Society, and the President's Council.

### MEMBERSHIP

The Umphrey Lee Associates is open to individuals who annually donate \$1,000; the Founders Society, \$5,000; and the President's Council, \$10,000. There is also a life membership for those who give more than \$100,000. Deferred gifts over \$1,000 count for membership, but they must have some ascertainable value that is irrevocable.

### SOLICITATION

Gifts are solicited through personal contact (which generates 55 percent of all gifts) and direct mail (45 percent). The level of giving tends to remain stationery. However, personal solicitations in the future will be tailored toward motivating donors to move from one level to the next.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

Plans for organizing a volunteer committee to head the organizations are under way and should be complete within this year.

Each year, four events are planned especially for the members. They include faculty lectures, concerts, barbecues, and formal dinners.

The organization's operating budget for this fiscal year is \$21,300.

## STANFORD UNIVERSITY

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Stanford University's major gift society is called The Inner Quad, after 12 classroom buildings that date from the time the university opened in 1891. The Quad's first annual report was published in 1969.

The Inner Quad really represents a giving level, rather than being a giving club or society. Giving levels are printed on remit devices, but, other than that, Inner Quad membership is not actively promoted through the annual fund solicitation programs.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who donate a minimum annual level of \$1,000 or more are placed on the Quad list. This \$1,000 can be an annual gift, a capital gift, or a deferred gift.

### SOLICITATION

Approximately 95 percent of the Quad donors come from the personal solicitation program. Donors who give \$250 or more are solicited through this effort. One percent of the Quad donors come from phone appeals and 4 percent through mail programs. Personal solicitation volunteers ask for increased gifts.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The Inner Quad has no volunteer leadership structure or specific program of events. However, members are listed in the Inner Quad Annual Report, with their permission.

The sum of \$7,000 has been budgeted for 1981-1982.

## SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Garnet is one of Swarthmore's school colors and circle implies being in the center--hence, Swarthmore's gift society is the Garnet Circle. It was founded in 1972.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who give \$1,000 annually are eligible for membership.

### SOLICITATION

A personal letter is sent to each Garnet Circle member at the beginning of the new alumni fund year from the Circle chairperson. Approximately 60 percent of the gifts come in this way. Another 10 percent come from phone calls, and the remaining 30 percent result from personal solicitation.

Both letters and phone calls are geared toward generating gift renewals.

The Garnet Circle gift most often remains at the entry level amount. However, many members do go on to make other larger restricted gifts.

Through letters and phone calls the college asks for increased gifts from a member who has been staying at the \$1,000 level for three years or more.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The Garnet Circle has a volunteer leadership including cochairpersons and a membership chairperson, but there is no special program of events.

Garnet Circle members' names are listed prominently in the annual development report. Members also receive special thank you letters from the president and a gift of appreciation.

## UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The original concept behind the University of Chicago's major gift society, the President's Fund, was to establish a fund for use at the president's discretion. It was founded in 1964.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership includes individuals (alumni, nonalumni, and parents) who give \$1,000 or more a year. Corporations that match individual gifts may also become members; they are listed in a special section of the "Honor Roll."

### SOLICITATION

In the fiscal year that ended June 30, 1981, the President's Fund raised \$1,573,921 from 607 donors. Approximately 85 percent of the annual gifts to the President's Fund are solicited by volunteers. The bulk (60 percent) of these solicitations are made by telephone. About 20 percent occur during personal visits and another 20 percent by volunteer-initiated letters. The remaining 15 percent of the gifts are solicited by direct mail, usually followed by a telephone call from the student program or staff.

When volunteers call, they mention the four gift levels within the President's Fund. This technique has expanded the number of gifts, which increased from 19 percent of the renewed membership in fiscal 1980 to 30 percent in 1981. The volunteers' own increased commitment has been instrumental in this achievement.

There are, at present, no plans to increase the minimum gift size for the President's Fund.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The President's Fund has a volunteer structure. All President's Fund members are invited to an annual dinner in October given by the president and a spring dinner dance held at reunion time. New members are invited in the summer to meet the president at a special reception followed by an evening performance of the Court Theatre. The president travels to New York, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles each

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO (continued)

year to meet President's Fund members. In addition, faculty participate in one event a year in these areas. The president and/or faculty also visit approximately three smaller cities each year to meet members.

Each member receives a small statuette as a gift. Members also receive a card entitling them to free admission to university athletic events and reference privileges at the library. Each year a listing of the President's Fund membership appears in an "Honor Roll."

The cost of programming and perks in fiscal 1961 was \$33,385.

## UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Presidents Council is the University of Florida's major gift society. Its name was chosen to honor past presidents of the university. The council was founded in 1970.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals, corporations, foundations, associations, and organizations are eligible for membership with a minimum annual gift of \$1,000.

### SOLICITATION

The University solicits through personal contact, telephone, direct mail and newsletters, but no studies have been done to pinpoint the results of each solicitation technique.

The university does not have an organized program for gift renewals. It plans activity in this area, but nothing official has been worked out yet.

Through personal contact and committee members who encourage increased giving, donors have tended to increase giving over the years.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The University of Florida Foundation, Inc. has appointed committees that oversee, through volunteerism, the various fund-raising functions.

There is an annual meeting at The Breakers in Palm Beach, including a dinner dance. The university hosts various events on campus to which Presidents Council members are invited.

Presidents Council members receive these other privileges: special guest status at the University of Florida Golf Club and at the J. Wayne Reitz Union recreational facilities, parking permit campus-wide, reserved parking for home football games, faculty status at the University of Florida libraries, and commemorative gifts according to level of membership.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA (continued)

The budget is approximately \$25,000-30,000 in direct costs to provide the members with programs, brochures, mailings, decals, perks, and other items.

## UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The University of Illinois named the Presidents Council, founded in 1964, to honor the university's past and present chief executives. The name was changed from Club to Council about four years ago to "recognize counsel" and the commitment of key benefactors.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who donate \$10,000 at a rate of \$1,000 annually for 10 years are eligible for membership. An intention of contributing \$25,000 or more through a deferred giving instrument is also acceptable.

### SOLICITATION

Donations are solicited primarily (75 percent) through personal contact, with some contact by phone or mail (25 percent).

Additional gifts tend to remain stationary, but some gifts do increase. The university is using the capital campaign as an impetus to more giving.

The university is considering higher gift levels, but there are no definite plans at this time.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

Volunteer leaders serve on the Presidents Council, and one member serves as financial resources central fund-raising leader.

Members meet in the spring at the Chicago Circle Campus and Medical Center; they meet in the fall at the Urbana-Champaign campus. There is also a fall annual meeting of the foundation. Other benefits include a certificate of membership, university library loan privileges, and various publications of the university and foundation.

## UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The University of Miami formed its Society of University Founders in 1966.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership includes individuals, corporations, foundations, associations, and organizations who give a minimum level of \$50,000, which can be paid over a maximum of five years.

Capital gifts qualify for membership, as well as deferred gifts in the form of trusts or annuities in excess of \$50,000.

### SOLICITATION

About one-half of the donors continue to increase their gifts.

There will be a higher level of society for those giving \$100,000 or \$250,000, the exact amount to be determined.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

There is an annual dinner for the founders at which the university gives public recognition to donors.

The cost of programming and perks is about \$45,000 per year.

## UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Father Edward Frederick Sorin, founder of Notre Dame University, symbolizes both the vision and the leadership of the major gift society that carries his name. The society was founded in 1976.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Edward Frederick Sorin Society includes individuals who give \$1,000 annually.

### SOLICITATION

Gifts solicited via personal contact account for 75 percent; direct mail accounts for 25 percent. Phone calls are used as reinforcements for these two methods.

Renewal notices are sent and followed up by personal contact; annual reports are sent; and letters over the chairperson's signature are sent on the anniversary of the donation.

In most cases, the donors who are renewing maintain their previous gift level and do not increase the amount of their gift.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

A formal volunteer chairperson serves for a two-year period.

The first formal and exclusive Sorin Society event planned is "A Day at Notre Dame" culminating with a black tie dinner. Other recognition includes a plaque, Faculty Club membership and subscription to university publications.

The costs of programming and perks are \$3,000.

## UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Benjamin Franklin stated in his Autobiography that he wished to associate with a number of active friends. Hence, the University of Pennsylvania, founded in 1955, uses this venerable's name for its major gift society, recently divided into three levels.

### MEMBERSHIP

The Benjamin Franklin Society has three levels of membership: Founders, \$10,000 a year and above; Fellows, \$5,000 a year and above; Associates, \$1,000 a year and above;

### SOLICITATION

Donors have tended to remain at the associates level. The new three-level structure is designed so that the staff can appropriately recognize an increased number of major benefactors. The emphasis will be shifted to seeking donors at the Founders and Fellows levels, rather than at the minimum Associates level.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

There will be a volunteer chairperson and steering committee in New York and Philadelphia.

The university solicits gifts in a variety of ways: personal contact, telethons, and direct mail, with the greatest response--75 percent--achieved by mail.

Donor recognition will be stratified as follows:

Founders: a regularly scheduled Trustees dinner, President's Dinner, opportunity to take a course in the College of General Studies program, rosette, regional social events, parking privileges, listing in Directory and on plaque;

Fellows: all of the above, except the Trustees dinner and rosette;

Associates: regional events, parking, two listings.

## UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The University of Richmond founded its Richmond Fellows in 1970.

### MEMBERSHIP

The Richmond Fellows has three clubs with varying annual gifts applicable as minimum level gifts: \$150 for the Second Century Club, \$500 for the President's Club, and \$1,000 for the Rector's Club. For the Rector's Club a deferred gift of \$10,000-50,000 in irrevocable estate gifts is also recognized.

### SOLICITATION

For the first two clubs within the Richmond Fellows, the university has been somewhat successful in generating renewed support through telephone contact and direct mail. A Richmond Fellows (past donor) telethon is held in December each year, and the return has been over 60 percent for renewals.

The Rector's Club relies more directly on personal contact and referrals. Volunteers and staff make regular calls on prospects and "suspects" to invite their membership in the Rector's Club.

Letters are also sent to those whose anniversary gift dates have passed.

The university has considered raising the membership gift level, and plans are being drawn for the formation of a \$5,000 gift organization. The top donors feel that this group should be very low key; invitations should be kept on an individual basis; the organization should be very small and not promoted, except among its members.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The Rector's Club has a nonalumnus voluntary chairperson who is a prominent business person and serves as a figurehead. The Richmond Fellows has a chairperson within the structure of the annual giving campaign who becomes involved in direct solicitation.

Three or four social events a year are held. The university finds these high-quality events successful inducements to

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND (continued)

attract wealthy residents of the community. A directory of members and their occupations is printed.

The cost of the Rector's Club is about \$10,000 a year.

## UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The Ira Allen Society of the University of Vermont, started in 1967, derives its name from the founder of both the state and the university.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals, corporations, foundations, associations, and organizations are invited to become members for an annual gift of \$1,000. Deferred gifts of this sum are also counted for membership. Capital givers are listed as associate members.

### SOLICITATION

The university uses three forms of solicitation, with more emphasis on telephone and personal contact. These two methods account for 80 percent of the donations. Direct mail generates 20 percent.

A program of renewal and upgrading will be implemented in fiscal year 1982. Giving seems to remain stationary, but a member celebrating a reunion may give more.

The university hopes that increased giving will result from face-to-face solicitation, which will start this year.

Once membership is built up in the Ira Allen Society, the university then foresees adding a \$10,000 and up gift club.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The Ira Allen Society has a volunteer structure consisting of a chairperson and regional vice-chairpersons who preside over regional committees that handle personal and or telephone solicitation.

Events range from regional functions to an on-campus Ira Allen Society weekend.

Costs of programming were \$14,500 for fiscal year 1981, excluding the salary of the staff person responsible for the program. The university expects costs to decrease in 1982.

## UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The University of Washington chose in 1972 to name its major gift society The President's Club to encourage the participation of and support from the administration and to demonstrate the relationship between the president and this top-level support group.

### MEMBERSHIP

The minimum level of gift required for membership is \$1,000 one year for The President's Club, and \$10,000 one year to qualify as a Benefactor. Lifetime membership in the President's Club is available with \$10,000 (\$1,000 or more a year for 10 years or outright) or a deferred gift pledge of \$35,000 or more. Benefactor status requires \$100,000 (outright or over 10 years) or \$250,000 deferred.

### SOLICITATION

New gifts (22 percent) are solicited through personal and telephone contact. Renewals (78 percent) are handled by mail and phone.

Members receive personalized renewal reminders one month before their anniversary dates, one month after, and two months after.

Increases in giving are not the norm; however, approximately 35 percent give more than the minimum amount.

The Benefactor distinction, to encourage annual gifts of \$10,000, was inaugurated in April 1981.

The university has discussed two higher gift levels: \$5,000 a year and \$1 million; however, neither is likely to be established within the near future.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The President's Club has its own chairperson and trustees who sit on a 21-member board. There are committees for membership, nominations, and events.

Some three to five events are planned each year. Two or three will be strictly social, sometimes held in conjunction with

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON (continued)

a cultural event on campus; one or two will include a lecture by a distinguished faculty member or will expose members to a research program.

Membership privileges include use of the library, golf driving range, and parking.

The cost of programming and perks is \$25,000 a year.

## WELLESLEY COLLEGE

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

The founder of Wellesley College was Henry F. Durant, whose name was chosen for the gift society at its inception in 1969.

### MEMBERSHIP

The Durant Society, with 1,149 members for 1981-82, includes individuals and family foundations, if the donor chooses not to be identified as an individual. The minimum level of gift required for membership is \$1,000 a year. A deferred gift can also be \$1,000, but the usual minimum for a deferred gift at Wellesley is \$5,000. Membership requirements may include corporate matching gifts.

### SOLICITATION

Wellesley's Durant Society relies heavily on a sequence of mailed solicitation letters to selected prospects and former members, including alumnae and parents and friends. In a recent year, 80 percent of the members came from the prospect pool, the remaining members having joined "spontaneously," i.e., in response to efforts such as class reunion gift approaches, personal calls for capital gifts, and telethon callers' reinforcement of the mailed appeal.

Wellesley has been involved in a major capital campaign for the last nine years. During this campaign some members have remained on the \$1,000 plateau, but most have climbed higher by giving a special reunion gift or a Centennial Fund capital gift. Adding new levels has been the strategy for raising donors' sights.

Solicitation letters, which are often individualized, request that the donor consider a higher (specified) level within the Durant Society. In 1980-81, when a successful effort was made to conclude the capital campaign a year ahead of schedule, all prospects were asked to increase their gifts by 50 percent--and an amazing number did just that. Appeal language often refers to the effects of inflation.

After careful review of the past 12 years' experience, Wellesley has decided not to raise the minimum gift required (\$1,000), but to add two new levels. It had already added the Sponsor (\$5,000) level. In 1981-82 it will establish

## WELLESLEY COLLEGE (continued)

a \$10,000 level and a cumulative \$50,000 level (the latter will count all gifts since the inception of the Durant Society). Thus, there will be four levels: \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$50,000.

## ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

Until now Wellesley's National Development Fund Committee chairperson has acted as the head of the Durant Society, and her name appears on the appeal letters. Beginning this year, the committee will have a member whose portfolio of responsibility will be the Durant Society. She will recruit a committee of major donors to serve with her; their functions are yet to be defined in detail.

In the first years of the Durant Society, the college held annual dinners on campus. Because Wellesley has a broad national constituency, these were dropped in favor of special events in various major cities. When a college officer, prominent faculty member, or a trustee visits a city, the college suggests that a local fund-raising volunteer hold a party for Durant Society members. About 10-12 such gatherings take place each year. The college provides suggested guest lists, invitations, and reimbursement. This year a reunion reception for Durant Society members held at the president's house was very successful.

First-time members receive a gift from the president--a copy of a recent history of Wellesley College (a book written at the time of the school's Centennial). Annual token gifts were sent to members for the first five to six years of the program, but this is no longer done. Members are recognized by a personal acknowledgment letter from the president and listing in the alumnae magazine (also circulated as a reprint with the following fall's appeal letter).

The Durant Society budget, excluding printing for stationery and entertainment reimbursements, runs almost \$10,000 per year. In addition, one director and one secretary spend about one quarter to one third of their time on this program.

## WHEATON COLLEGE

### NAME AND BACKGROUND

Wheaton College has five major gift societies: Mary Lyon Circle, named after a woman who was instrumental in the college's founding; President's Circle; Patron's Circle; Wheaton Circle; and Alpha Circle, so-named to designate the "first step."

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership is based on annual gifts from individuals. The gift levels for each club are: Mary Lyon Circle, \$5,000 and above; President's Circle, \$1,000-\$4,999; Patrons Circle, \$500-\$999; Wheaton Circle, \$250-\$499; and Alpha Circle, \$100-\$249. Alpha Circle is for alumnae of the 15 most recent classes.

### SOLICITATION

Telephone contact is the primary method of solicitation. Direct mail and personal notes are also used.

For the past two years, overall goals have aimed for specific increases (20 percent last year, for example) in all gift categories. Next year, the Alpha and Wheaton circles will be eliminated. Within the next three to five years, all but the \$1,000 and \$5,000 circles will be phased out.

### ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The societies will resume having a volunteer leadership structure next year.

Members receive a gift each year, such as a record of student music or a brochure reprinting a speech by a visitor to campus.

## THE GIFT OF BELONGING: BUILDING A PROGRAM FOR PRIORITY PROSPECTS

David C. Ferner

Vice President and Director of Development

Minnesota Orchestral Association and Consultant

If there be any "magic" in educational fund raising, you can find it in the number and variety of imaginative plans known as associates programs, or gift clubs.

These are special methods of relating top-priority persons to the institution. Club membership requires a large annual or deferred gift commitment or both, encourages a close association with the institution, and fosters members' help in advancing its goals.

The magic of the associates program includes financial commitment. But, more importantly, it consists of the interaction that such a program produces between your institution and its goals, on the one hand, and persons of influence and affluence, on the other.

I refer only to associates programs that invite the membership of individuals. I'm not including those that include organizational, corporate, or church memberships. Also, I'm not concerning myself with the Century Club or other programs for donors of \$100 or less. The associates program aims at a much higher gift level and hopes to achieve it through a more sophisticated program of activities and involvement.

In one sense, the associates program applies capital gift fund-raising methods to the annual fund. You must consider your priority prospects--the top 10 percent--as candidates for large annual gifts as well as for major capital gifts. Constituents aren't equal in their ability to give or in their capacity to lead. It is vital that you plan with this fact in mind.

### WHY ASSOCIATES PROGRAMS?

The most common purposes of gift club programs are to:

1. recognize and honor individuals who have shown unusual interest in the institution and have supported it financially;

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Reprinted from CASE CURRENTS, November, 1980.

2. inform these people in greater detail about the purposes, programs, and plans of the institution;
3. involve members and make them continuously aware of the institution's importance to education and of education's vital role in the nation's future;
4. provide opportunities for members to learn about and use the institution's services and resources, including the expertise of its faculty and administration;
5. prepare members to become effective ambassadors of the institution in the social and business communities;
6. develop volunteers to serve as advisers, fund-raising leaders, and trustees;
7. create and maintain a firm base of annual gift support and instill in members a readiness to support other important projects of the institution.

#### MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

Most successful programs have adopted one or several of these criteria as a basis for membership:

Annual gift. The most common standard is a minimum annual gift, usually \$1,000. More and more institutions are creating higher membership categories to challenge top prospects and to offset inflation. Many schools, colleges, and universities have set membership standards at \$5,000, \$10,000, or both.

Some institutions request donors to commit a minimum pledge over a specific number of years, for instance \$10,000 payable annually at \$1,000.

By adopting an annual gift standard for membership, institutions stress the recurring need for gift income and the continuing leadership of associates. Usually institutions encourage or require prospective members to sign a pledge indicating that they will commit themselves to a minimum gift each year or for a specific number of years. Members reserve the right to alter pledges as circumstances dictate.

In most cases, new members will continue membership for one or more additional years after the pledge period. If your

institution keeps the relationship interesting and rewarding, you enhance the chances for continued participation.

Although you can use associates program gifts for a variety of purposes, most institutions stress unrestricted giving for current operations. Some require that all gifts from associates be unrestricted. Others have sought associates' gifts for a single expendable purpose such as faculty salaries or student scholarships. And still others provide a list of purposes, including unrestricted use, from which associates may choose.

If you permit associates to designate gift purposes, it's important to limit the choice to a few specific needs. Special-interest gifts, if they are ever acceptable, should be considered only an addition to the requisite associates gift.

Deferred gift. More and more institutions include a deferred gift commitment, either as an alternative to or in addition to a current gift, as acceptable for membership. For example, a donor may establish an irrevocable charitable trust for at least \$25,000; he or she may irrevocably assign to the institution a life insurance policy with a face value of \$10,000 or more; or an associate may submit a letter stating that a bequest of \$25,000 or more has been written into his or her will.

Other programs, even if they don't encourage a specific deferred gift qualification for membership, often suggest that members use estate planning methods to perpetuate their current annual gifts.

Institutions that stimulate deferred or planned gift commitments in their associate programs usually get more current and deferred gift income.

Matching gift. Institutions vary, unfortunately, in their policies on the use of corporate matching gifts. I strongly recommend against letting individuals count matching gifts to qualify for associates programs. Instead, apply the matching gift over and above such standards. This policy is in keeping with the intention of corporate matching gift programs--to serve as an incentive to increase giving. It also maintains a single standard for all associates, many of whom do not work for matching gift companies.

Lifetime memberships. Some institutions provide for a lifetime membership in their associates programs. For example, a gift of \$10,000 may qualify an associate for life, and such a gift may not necessarily be for current operating

purposes. Generally, I don't recommend lifetime memberships. They discourage continued giving and don't challenge the donor to his or her true potential. Also, you should maintain distinctions between annual and capital giving with appropriate forms of recognition for each.

Honorary memberships. A few institutions provide for honorary memberships to recognize individuals of outstanding achievement. I advise keeping any honorary category to a minimum because these individuals often have the means to meet the regular membership criteria.

#### MEMBERSHIP ENLISTMENT

Here are step-by-step directions on how to build your associates program.

Research. To start or sustain a gift club, you must maintain accurate and up-to-date files of prospects. A valid prospect list comes from continuing constituency research by you and your staff. With good files, you can identify gift club prospects and supply reliable information to volunteer solicitors.

Prospect sources. Although a few institutions limit gift club membership to alumni, most also include individuals related to the institution in other ways. This is advisable.

In theory, your institution should expect at least 1 percent of its total constituency to have the potential for making an annual gift of \$1,000 or more. Obviously, if yours is an affluent constituency, you can expect a much higher percentage--often 5 or 10 percent.

You may find prospects among trustees and former trustees; alumni (graduates and nongraduates); parents of students and alumni; business, community, or church leaders; friends and relatives of trustees, alumni, students, faculty, and staff; honorary degree recipients; members of advisory councils; and faculty and staff.

To get your new associates program off to a good start, trustees and volunteer leaders must set an example to other prospects, particularly those outside the immediate institutional family. If they don't, your program may become impersonal. Such programs rely too heavily on direct mail from "paper" chairpersons and have only superficial communication with and involvement of associates.

## ENLISTMENT IMPERATIVES

Follow these three rules in enlisting members:

1. Approach prospects in person. Usually a one-to-one invitation by a peer works best. Remember that more than one visit may be necessary to secure a large gift. Letters can be helpful, but only to confirm a discussion, not as a substitute for one.
2. Don't write off a prospect because of his or her negative attitude. You never know what a person will do if challenged by the right person at the right time for the right reason.
3. Invite first those with the greatest capacity to give. Seek leadership gifts first as a standard and inspiration for the rest to follow. When you have two levels of membership, secure the upper category first.

## GOALS FOR YOUR PROGRAM

Institutions often set specific membership and dollar goals. If these are realistic, they strengthen your appeal to prospects and serve as incentives for volunteer leaders and staff. You can establish such goals based on budgetary needs, potential of your constituency, analysis of what is achievable, assessment of what represents a real challenge, or a combination of these factors.

## SPONSORING COMMITTEE

You should organize your gift club under the leadership of a sponsoring group. It may consist of a chairperson and a small number of associates or it may be a more formal organization. (Naturally, sponsors must themselves be members of the associates program.)

Whatever structure you choose, your associates program leadership should: (1) communicate and promote the objectives of the program; (2) increase membership each year by selecting individuals who qualify, inviting them to join, and obtaining their membership gifts; and (3) plan and sponsor a program that will maintain a close and informed relationship between the associates and the institution.

## ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNICATIONS

To operate a successful associates program, you must communicate with members, involve them, and reward them on the highest possible level. They respond favorably to special invitations to meet with the school, college, or university trustees and executives for discussions of problems and opportunities. As friends of education, associates are interested in the larger issues of education and the relationship of these issues to the business world and to society.

Associates usually take pride in their special identification with the institution. Although some may wish to remain anonymous, the majority will like being recognized publicly. Many institutions invest too little time in cultivating prospective associates, and then spend even less time with those who become contributing members.

Consider these activities and communications to maintain and increase the interest of associates.

1. Annual dinner. Perhaps the most common activity, the annual dinner for associates provides outstanding persons the opportunity to address the members on a topic of great importance. This event may include the presentation of an award to one or more individuals who have made major contributions to the institution and society. The dinner also gives the program's chairperson and the institution's chief executive an opportunity to make their annual reports and to announce future plans.
2. Associates Day. For this annual event, you can invite members to visit the campus, attend classes, meet faculty and students, tour facilities, hear reports from administrators, and have dinner with the president and trustees.
3. Associates' seminars or roundtables. These give the president, administrators, and selected faculty another opportunity to discuss educational plans, problems, and opportunities frankly with associates. This may be done annually on Associates Day or several times a year during lunch or dinner, alternating between the campus and members' homes and clubs.
4. Individual interest. You can invite each associate to express an interest in some particular area of the institution's program--academic, administrative, student, research. Your institution then can make a conscientious effort to offer the associate a chance to acquire further information, participate in programs, or help in the planning and development in that area.

5. President's, chancellor's, or school head's letter. This personal communication, written several times a year, informs members of your institution's progress and activities. Usually the chief executive discusses only one or two topics in each letter. This "insiders" letter is individually typed with personalized salutations and handwritten signatures.

6. Faculty publications. From time to time a faculty book makes an appropriate gift to associates. Have the faculty author autograph the book. You can add an especially designed book plate and enclose a covering letter from the president.

7. Significant publications on education. At times, the institution may identify a book, report, or speech of great significance to education as important for members to read. Affix the special book plate and send the publication with a cover letter from the president.

8. Recognition certificates, plaques, and commemorative objects. Upon joining the gift club, the individual member may receive a certificate or plaque. The certificate includes the member's name and first year of membership, and the signatures of the institution's chief executive, associates program chairperson, and governing board chairperson. Other commemorative objects may include medallions, silver trays, and chairs.

#### PRINTED MATERIALS

Of course you should consider preparing a special presentation for enlisting members. Many institutions print high-quality brochures. The length, elaborateness, and cost of these brochures vary greatly, as does the effectiveness of their design and copy.

You can start your associates program by typing up a prospectus for each charter member prospect.

Whatever their form, successful gift club materials include the: (1) purpose of the program; (2) membership criteria; (3) case for the institution and program; (4) statement of intent or gift transmittal form and return envelope; (5) current members and sponsoring committee; and (6) governing board members.

Institutions often neglect to state by word of mouth or in print the case for their associates programs. To help trustees, volunteers, and institutional executives interpret the program, and to aid enlistment, you must prepare a statement of the case for the associates program. Then feature this in all program material.

## PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Successful fund-raising programs are trustee inspired, volunteer led, and staff serviced.

The president serves as a powerful catalyst. His or her role includes: insisting on a strong program with challenging goals; interpreting the program to the board and enlisting its leadership; enlisting a gift club chairperson; inviting a number of individuals into membership; inviting associates to special events and participating in them; and communicating personally and regularly with associates.

Meanwhile, the staff has equally important responsibilities. They include: outlining the program (including purpose, membership qualifications, and activities); identifying prospects; preparing program and enlistment materials; assigning prospects to solicitors and following up on solicitations; reporting progress; preparing special communications and events; seeing that pledge reminders are sent and that gifts are receipted and acknowledged; and maintaining program and membership records, directly or through the central records office.

Many institutions spend too little staff time and budget on major prospects such as associates and too much time on the total constituency. It's a case of misplaced priorities. To succeed, you must learn to put your time and resources where the potential is greatest. An associates program has this potential.

## BUILDING GIFT CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Robert D. Sweeney\*  
Vice President for Development  
Loyola College in Maryland

How do you build a big gift club with a small staff? By using volunteers to help enlist new members--and by making special gifts a priority.

This plan has worked for us at the University of Richmond where our \$1,000-a-year Rector's Club has grown from 19 charter members in 1970 to 350 members in 1979-80. At the same time, our two full-time fund raisers and vice president have run a successful \$50 million capital campaign.

## IDENTIFYING DONORS

I am not going to cover standard research techniques for turning up gift club prospects. But I should note that we have no research staff. It is up to everyone associated with the university to identify prospects.

We've found that people of wealth have an unbelievable web of intermarriages and interlocking business interests. We are always on the lookout for a wealthy person married to someone who attended UR or for a prospect who has a child or other relative who was once a student here.

We find that it pays to keep our ears open to bits and pieces of information that may come in an offhand comment or a cocktail conversation. Outward trappings of wealth and success are not always true indicators of financial worth. Many of the best prospects are the most low key.

Of course we watch the weekly newspaper legal notices and listings of real estate transactions of \$25,000 or more. If an individual is dealing in million-dollar transactions, our ears perk up. Many times people form a separate corporation for the deal. So we go to the attorney general's office where we can find out the principals of every group incorporated within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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\*Sweeney was formerly Associate Director of Development, University of Richmond.

Reprinted from CASE CURRENTS, November, 1980.

The same goes for foundations. In Virginia, all foundations must register with the attorney general's office. Their directors and lists of gifts for the past year are public documents. We find out a great deal about family wealth and giving patterns through reading the foundation annual reports.

Keeping your eyes open can also pay dividends. When I drive through campus, I note the occasional Mercedes or other expensive cars in the student parking lot. Then I write down the student's parking permit number, and find out who owns the car. It's amazing how many exceptional parent prospects we unearth this way.

#### GETTING HELP

We get our best leads on gift club prospects from current donors and volunteers. This didn't happen overnight. We began by continually asking people close to the institution to recommend others to us.

Our most fruitful sources of prospect referrals have been stockbrokers, bankers, and tax attorneys. Often these professionals can give substantial information about a client without betraying any confidences. References such as "She's had a great year in the stock market" or "It would be to his benefit to give money away before the end of the year" have meant large gifts for UR.

We constantly encourage Rector's Club members to refer others in their church, business, or social circles to the university. We ask these members to invite guests to club functions. We also ask our members to recommend no more than three individuals whom they feel would enjoy membership in our Rector's Club. (It's not that we wouldn't accept as many as they would give us, but this makes the organization seem more exclusive to our members.)

Surprisingly, we also find clergymen a good referral source. After all, people comment to their ministers about interests or social needs that may tie in with university programs.

We also come up with new prospects and good contacts by running rating programs around the country. We ask several prominent alumni in an area to rate lists of alumni, parents, and friends from that region. Because in many small towns it is hard to keep secrets about wealth, this is an excellent way to turn up potential donors.

### PICKING THE CONTACT

None of this information does us any good if we don't find the right person to involve the prospect and interest him or her in UR. Here is where a high-level group of volunteers and trustees comes in. At UR, we call this our "roundtable program" because it got its start when a small group of leadership volunteers gathered around the circular table at the home of a leading donor.

First, the staff evaluates each of our VIP files of corporations, foundations, and individuals. We decide what priority the prospect has, what action should be taken, and whether to include the prospect at the next roundtable. Often we will put only 10 to 15 names on the roundtable docket. The roundtable committee of prominent bankers, business leaders, stockbrokers, and attorneys will spend several hours reviewing these names--or only part of them.

In addition to the roundtable, we also ask our annual giving leadership and our parents' steering committee to help.

When we feel a prospect has a connection with a volunteer who is not a member of the roundtable committee, we will invite this volunteer to a meeting with the sole purpose of obtaining more insight on the prospect. At roundtable meetings, we decide who can make the best contact and how to proceed. At almost every meeting, our volunteers take assignments. This may include an immediate solicitation or simply a plan for gradual cultivation.

### CULTIVATING THE DONOR

Cultivation may take many forms. After our staff evaluations and the roundtable sessions, the three of us with fund-raising responsibilities each take approximately 20 to 30 key special giving prospects. We are responsible for making at least one monthly cultivation "move" on each with the goal of receiving a gift at the level determined through our evaluation program.

We meet approximately every two weeks to review this list of prospects and report what action has taken place. Many times the activities are extremely simple--a letter over the president's signature congratulating the prospect on a recent promotion, a birthday greeting from the president's office, a note and a copy of a speech given on a subject of interest to the prospects, or an invitation to the prospect to a luncheon before an athletic or cultural event. Our purpose is continually to update interest and to involve the individual.

To cultivate a prospect successfully, you must have the president's commitment. Our president, E. Bruce Heilman, is a development officer's dream. He is accessible to us and allows us a great deal of flexibility in the use of his signature, his home, and his time.

The president will telephone a prospect before one of our visits and say, "I'm so glad to hear you are going to meet with Bob Sweeney of my staff. I just want to say that he is going to be talking about something that is very important to me personally, and I hope you will lend a positive ear." This can open many doors for the volunteer or staff member.

### ENTERTAINING

At Richmond we entertain extensively to support our gift club program. We hold breakfasts and luncheons for corporate leaders and other prospects, at which these people meet with the president and learn more about the university. You can imagine the surprise when an individual has a very tasteful meal in a pleasant surrounding, is made to feel important, and then doesn't hear a request for an immediate gift.

The development office has the use of the 100-seat president's box for both football and basketball. I make sure that we fill this box with giving prospects or other important constituents. Our office handles all logistics.

Prior to each event, we brief the president. We give him the names of those coming, in many cases a seating chart showing who will be located strategically near him, and topics that he should mention to prospects.

In entertaining, remember that, although the program may be simple, it should be first class. These individuals can go to any type of cocktail party or eat any type of food that they wish, so a big spread is not the secret. Instead, the degree of uniqueness and associated prestige make the function special.

We use almost every location on campus and every type of event--a pre-Christmas Victorian dinner, a lecture, a play, or simply a backyard barbeque at the president's house. I don't believe that you gain any points by having a function at the local country club; prospects can go there any time they want.

Virginians traditionally entertain at home, and we seek out some of the most prestigious homes in the Richmond area for

our cultivation functions. Invitations read: "Mr. and Mrs. Henry Smith cordially invite you to their home for a reception honoring special members of the University of Richmond community."

We often ask an individual whom we are trying to cultivate to host the event. (Of course, we pay for catering and other costs.) Nothing can bring a person closer to the university than to work with members of the staff on a function in his or her own home.

Although we use this approach for several events each year, the most significant is the Rector's Club garden party, generally held in June. We invite our entire Rector's Club membership.

This garden party has developed into an outstanding social event. People give \$1,000 or more simply to be at this Rector's Club function. At times the host and hostess have been so proud of the party that they have asked to cover the expenses so it would really be their own. When they do, we give them gift credit for the amount.

#### ASKING FOR THE GIFT

The only way to get the substantial gift you are hoping for is by asking for it. After the long series of events that lead up to the solicitation, you should definitely know the prospect's interests and be prepared to submit an appropriate proposal. As in any solicitation, the best way to ask for a gift is in person and, depending on the level of the gift, the best person to ask for it is a peer. In fact, current Rector's Club members or other top volunteers often offer to help.

We try to be sure that our volunteer solicitor is not such a good friend that the prospect will not hesitate to turn him or her down. We generally like to use a solicitor who has some business relationships with the prospect; this gives leverage.

After you brief the volunteer, give him or her the proper supporting materials. We have used the personal proposals for gifts with great success. In them we state exactly what action the donor should take, the amount of the gift, and for what purpose. Generally, the president signs these proposals, and we hand deliver them.

Who makes the call? We use the volunteer solicitor and a staff member. The staff member can give the background on the institution, and the volunteer can talk about the

university from an objective standpoint and relate to the prospect his or her own reasons for involvement.

People are not insulted by being asked to make a gift that is above their means. But we have had instances where a prospect has been insulted because the suggested gift did not reflect his or her true financial worth.

The key word in personal solicitation should be consider: Will the prospect consider making a gift to qualify him or her as a member of the Rector's Club? Or will the prospect consider increasing a \$1,000 gift to \$5,000? This leaves the door open.

Don't be bashful about having staff members make personal calls on their own. We often do this for Rector's Club membership, and save our so-called "clout" for larger gifts.

We generally do not solicit \$1,000 gifts over the phone. If we can't meet with the individual in person, we usually request support through a letter and then follow up later in person.

Although we have received several \$1,000 gifts over the phone during our phonathons, we always remove past \$1,000 donors from our phonathons prospect cards, and approach them in person.

We are convinced that our direct mail materials do help motivate gifts of \$1,000 by effectively stating our case. Thirty days before the anniversary date of an individual's last \$1,000 gift, we send the donor a personal letter from the chairperson of the Rector's Club or a rector, thanking the donor for the past gift and asking for a renewal. In many cases, we ask the donor to consider increasing his or her gift. If we do not receive a response, we make a personal call.

We have found that one of the best ways to interest a prospect in a special giving club is to tell him or her who already holds membership. This year we created a Rector's Club directory, which we use in our direct mail and personal solicitations.

#### THANK YOU

The thank you is the first step in reinvolving the donor. A typical donor of \$1,000 or more will receive a thank-you letter from the president and from the development staffer.

When UR receives a gift from a corporation, foundation, or individual outside the Richmond area, we often call alumni or parents in that area and ask them to thank the donor. We are convinced that this works.

We also say thank you in person. We make it a practice whenever possible to go by and personally thank individuals for their gifts of \$1,000 or more.

Finally, we've organized "Operation Thank You." In this, annual giving and alumni leaders make personal calls at the end of the year on all those who have given \$100 or more. At that time they present donors with a university desk secretary or pocket calendar. Such a visit often motivates the individual to make a year-end gift without further solicitation.

#### THE SPIPAL CONTINUES

Those who join the Rector's Club soon find that they are more interested simply because they have an investment in the university. From club members, we have garnered much of our annual and capital campaign leadership. We turn to club members to fill advisory committees to various schools. We have also chosen members of our Rector's Club to serve as members of the Board of Associates. Some Board of Trustees members have also gotten their start in UR work through initial membership in the club.

The moral of all this: Special gift clubs provide more than just money. They lead to involvement, and with this involvement comes additional investment in the institution.